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Summer programs help high schoolers grow



Dr. Salam Ibrahim works with RAP student Shannon Walston.

THEY ARRIVE SUBDUED and nervous — even tearful — as they wave goodbye to parents. For some high schoolers, an SAES summer residential program is their first time away from home.

By the time their parents pick them up weeks later, the tears are for the new friends and nurturing environment they must leave behind. Parents say they see and appreciate the positive change.

“I was so proud of her. She looked professional, like a college student. This is what I wanted for her,” said Alysia Farley of Charlotte, of her daughter Cheron, who recently completed a four-week research apprenticeship.

Nicole Allen of Charlotte was also impressed at “the maturity level” she observed in her daughter, Jabria, who overcame a phobia of animals in her study on laboratory mice.

“I do see growth in her. She was terrified of animals before,” her mother said.

Summer residential programs for high schoolers in the SAES have been helping young people grow in confidence and scholastic competence for more than 30 years. The School now holds three summer residential programs each summer:

- **Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP)** — Students spend a month between mid-June and mid-July learning agrisciences research methodology, and completing an independent research project under the mentorship of top scientists in the SAES.
- **Institute for Future Agricultural Leaders (IFAL)** — Co-sponsored by the North Carolina Farm Bureau, the week-long program builds leadership potential in rising seniors who are interested in agriscience professions.

- **Food and Agribusiness Industries Summer Program (FAISP)** — A two-week program for high school juniors and seniors who have an interest in business, science and math.

Although summer programs build in plenty of time for activities and outings, they are more boot camp than summer camp. Here, students get oriented and prepared for both the demands and opportunities ahead. Students are required to complete a research or service learning project during their residence, and both RAP and FAISP provide them a stipend.

“The FAISP provides high school students who would otherwise not have an opportunity to discover college and the numerous opportunities beyond college,” said Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore, associate professor of agricultural economics, who established and now coordinates the FAISP program.

For more information about the SAES’s summer residential programs for high schoolers, please visit <http://www.ncat.edu/academics/saes/index.html>.

New SAES academic options

The reshaping and realigning of SAES academic programs that began in 2011 is continuing. While 2011 saw the discontinuation of several undergraduate and graduate majors, with fall 2012 semester comes the addition of new academic offerings focusing on nutrition, family, environment, and consumer sciences. These include:

- A new B.S. in Agricultural Science, Agroecosystems and Environmental Studies offering three concentrations: urban and community horticulture; sustainable land management, or environmental studies.
- An 18-credit hour minor in Child Development.
- Expansion of the Food and Nutritional Sciences degree to include a concentration in pre-medicine nutrition. Students selecting this concentration will be prepared to apply to medical school.
- Expansion of the Family and Consumer Sciences degree to include a concentration that focuses on consumer issues.

During the current academic year, the SAES administration will also be seeking approval for a new master’s degree in Agricultural and Environmental Systems that will offer three distinct concentrations: integrated animal health systems; food and agribusiness systems management, and natural resources and environmental systems.

Dr. Antoine Alston, interim associate dean for academic studies, pointed out that these updates to the academic program reflect a changing society that is becoming increasingly aware of environmental and health issues.

“In the past, people were moving away from agriculture, but with the growing emphasis on green industries and healthy living, people are getting reconnected with the food, fiber and environmental systems again, so we have had to realign our programs to meet those needs,” he said.

A&T Cooperative Extension struts stuff for other 1890s

Three members of The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T brought home top-poster honors from the national Association of Extension Administrators Conference held in June in Memphis. First-place honors went to Dr. Jimo Ibrahim, Lisa Poser and Kurt Taylor from a field of competition that included the work of Extension staff from 17 other 1890 institutions.



IBRAHIM, the farm safety, energy and environmental specialist for Cooperative Extension, presented “North Carolina All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety Awareness Education Program: ATV Safety — It is in Your Hands.” Ibrahim’s poster recapped impacts in counties where ATV safety training was conducted. In those counties, youth ATV injuries and fatalities were reduced by 20 percent, while parental supervision increased as much as 60 percent. Statistics also showed that 60 percent of youth in participating counties now ride appropriate sized ATVs after training, and the number of ATVs on public roads decreased by 50 percent after training.



POSER presented “Growing Food & Community in North Carolina Community Gardens,” offering a look at Cooperative Extension’s community gardening programs in Bertie, Durham and Scotland counties. Poser, an Extension associate who coordinates community gardens, cited economic, health and community benefits among the major program impacts on her poster. Successes include: 85 percent

of garden participants eating more vegetables, eating healthier and trying vegetables they hadn’t previously consumed; 48 percent sharing food with other gardeners, friends, family and church members; 67 percent saving money by not having to buy as much food at grocery stores or markets; and 97 percent succeeding in growing food for their families.



TAYLOR presented “Strategic Year-Round Vegetable Production Using High Tunnel Technology for Small-Scale, Limited-Resource Farmers,” in which he documented the benefits of teaching farmers and others to extend growing seasons using high tunnels. An associate for Cooperative Extension’s Agriculture and Natural Resources division, Taylor noted that the covered hoop structures known as high tunnels

help farmers capture a greater market share by providing produce and goods — such as fall strawberries and tomatoes — to customers when their competitors cannot. Taylor’s poster impact demonstrated: an increase in high-tunnel farms from four to 23, that profitability and sustainability have increased, and that more than \$34,000 worth of vegetables from the University Farm’s horticulture areas were donated to not-for-profit organizations working to feed the hungry.

Grants program localizing

NEW APPROACHES to familiar issues are the strength of the innovative grants initiative offered through The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University. Designed to strengthen programs, encourage teamwork and collaboration, and to empower communities and individuals, innovative grants of \$10,000 have been awarded this year for six initiatives focused on local foods.

The idea is to address community issues of hunger, sustainability, obesity, knowledge, health and other issues around local foods. Agents and county directors have responded with ideas and initiatives that include introducing children and adults to local foods and ways to prepare them.

“We’ve had some very innovative projects funded under this umbrella,” says Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, associate dean and administrator of The Cooperative Extension Program. “These projects cut across geographic boundaries, disciplines and socio-economic levels.”

Focusing on local food is also this year’s theme for the North Carolina Cooperative Extension’s county units as well as state-level leadership at A&T and N.C. State. Better connections between consumers and local foods were addressed in detail during district meetings across the state in the spring.

Among the projects receiving funding through A&T Extension’s innovative grants initiative is a two-years-in-the-making plan to establish a food hub to serve a five-county region (Anson, Richmond, Montgomery, Union and Stanly) in the south-central part of the state. Under the leadership of respective county Extension staff and South Piedmont Community College, the project has a grant from Cooperative Extension to help local farmers organize a hub that will provide more locally grown produce to area restaurants, markets and to the public.

In Forsyth County, members of the Extension staff have developed an edible school yard on wheels, known as the Mobile Earth Education Tool (MEET). Organizers plan to take it to six Title I schools in Forsyth County to either develop new gardens or advance existing ones. The idea is to help educate and introduce children to new food choices, healthier food,

agriculture innovatively



Maria Mendez (left) of Winston-Salem got a helping hand from Don Mebane, a community development agent with Forsyth County Cooperative Extension, in establishing a community garden that became a "Solutions for North Carolina" success story in 2011. All six of the "innovative grants" for 2012 have potential to become similar community success stories.

and to expand the number of schools participating in garden-based learning.

Another award went to Guilford County for a project that will provide teachers with lesson plans for school gardens that will become garden-based learning centers as well as resources for improving the diets of children from families with limited financial resources.

A Hoke County Cooperative Extension agent has received funding for food preparation demonstrations at the county farmers market that will turn up the heat on seasonal produce, and healthy lifestyle workshops at churches as well as the county Extension center. Extension will also work with the County Health Department to reach families with limited resources with information on the health advantages of increasing fruits and vegetables in their diets. The outreach will also provide vouchers that will encourage families to buy more locally grown produce.

Healthier food supplies for local food banks is the primary objective for

a Greene County project. The produce will be provided by community gardens tended by families that are in need of affordable sources for fresh fruit and vegetables. The gardeners keep 90 percent of their yields, while the other 10 percent goes to food banks.

In Scotland County, youth who have had brushes with the juvenile justice system will be channeled to entrepreneurship via a community supported agriculture project (CSA) that will take advantage of a high tunnel greenhouse at a county high school to produce fresh produce for the county's "food deserts" (areas where food retailers are primarily convenience stores).

"We're trying to bring about a greater awareness of the idea of local foods, of getting foods into local communities and ensuring a safe and healthy nutritious supply of foods," McKinnie says.



DR. FLETCHER BARBER JR.

has been named associate administrator of The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T. In this role he will provide leadership to county and state programs. Barber has 30 years of service with North Carolina

Cooperative Extension Service, and 21 of those years he served as a county Extension director. He also has experience as an agriculture program specialist with the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. He also retired from the United States Army, where he served both active duty and as a reserve. Barber received his Ed.D. from North Carolina State University, and both his bachelor's and master's in agricultural education from A&T.



DR. GLADYS GIBSON SHELTON

has been named interim program leader for Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H for The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T. Shelton began her professional career in Cooperative Extension at

North Carolina State University, followed by an extensive career as a research scientist in housing with A&T's Agricultural Research Program. She was also an associate professor, specializing in housing, at the University of Georgia prior to a series of administrative positions: Department chair of Family and Consumer Sciences at A&T and interim dean of the School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Shelton received her Ph.D. from Virginia Tech, her master's from Cornell and her bachelor's from North Carolina Central University.



DR. ROSA PURCELL of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences was one of three recipients of the American Association of Family and Consumer Science's 2012 Distinguished Service Award.

The award was presented in

recognition of career achievements in family and consumer sciences, professional contributions and contributions to leadership at both state and national levels. She has been involved with the AAFCS Council of Certification and Accreditation, the Awards and Recognition Committee, and the Ethics Committee.

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on the *move*/flip side



*Kurt Taylor, an A&T
Extension Associate,
provides guidance at
the 11th Annual Small
Farms Field Day at the
University Farm on
June 21.*

Mark Your Calendar

- **University-wide opening day program for A&T faculty and staff: Aug. 10**
- **SAES academic year kickoff: Aug. 10**
- **First day of classes, fall semester: Aug. 15**
- **A&T Homecoming: Oct. 27**

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